WASHTENAW COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY - Founded December 17, 1857 OCTOBER 1991

WASHTENAW IMPRESSIONS

BLUE TARP AT 500 NORTH MAIN SIGNALS ROOF WORK; NOT SO OBVIOUS MUSEUM PLANNING EQUALLY VITAL

The blue tarp on the roof at 500 North Main Street means work is progressing on re-shingling the MUSEUM ON MAIN STREET with more historically appropriate wooden shingles. The work is being done by the Bob Behnke Company.

They have made some exploratory incisions to determine whether the house originally had an interior gutter system. (It did not.)

By removing a portion of the rear roof we are hoping to determine the cause of its prominent sag. If it is not possible to remove the sag entirely, we will look for ways to stabilize the structure, so the sag will not increase. Then the new cedar shingles can be applied.

The roof will enhance the appearance of the house, making it look as it did originally.

Work done and changes made to to the house are easily observed by anyone driving past. Equally important, but not so obvious, is the work done by the Museum Planning Committee.

This group of about twenty, chaired by Nancy McKinney, is doing a wonderful job of studying the many details necessary to establishing a museum.

Recently Doug Kelley and Grace Shackman, along with Janice Bhavsar, Nancy McKinney, Pauline Walters and Susan Wineberg, have made day-long visits to historical museums in Monroe, Adrian, Dearborn, Wyandotte and Wayne. They have met with museum directors, taken tours, and filled out a questionnaire on each museum.

The results of their survey will be very important to use as we transform our house into a museum. Marguerite Harms and Elaine Sims, also on the Museum Planning Committee, are putting together some ideas for a Museum Shop. Everyone's hard work is appreciated!

WCHS will again be decorating a Christmas tree at Englanders this year and soliciting donations. If we raise the most money, we will also win $1000. Pat Johnston and Pat Jackunas will again be in charge of the decorations. Let me know if you would like to be involved, too.

Karen O'Neal
665-2242

WASHTENAW COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Next Meeting

OPEN HOUSE MUSEUM ON MAIN STREET

1 to 4 p.m. Sunday, October 20, 1991

500 North Main Ann Arbor, Michigan

NOVEMBER MEETING SET

Dr. Ramon Hernandez, director of the Ann Arbor Public Library, will speak to WCHS on "History of Ann Arbor's Libraries" at the newly enlarged library, 343 South Fifth Avenue, at 2 p.m. Sunday, November 17.

DONATION INFORMATION

Anyone wishing to donate to the WCHS museum fund may send checks to:

NBD Ann Arbor
Attention: Mr. Eugene Fowler
P.O. Box 8601
125 South Main Street
Ann Arbor, MI 48107-8601

Information:
Pauline Walters, 662-9092

FROM THE PRESIDENT
MUSEUM ON MAIN STREET OPEN HOUSE OCTOBER 20

Mark Sunday, October 20th on your calendar and come inspect the **Museum on Main Street: *A Museum of County Life***. The Washtenaw County Historical Society's October meeting will take place at our headquarters-to-be at 500 North Main Street at the corner of Beakes and Kingsley Streets from 1 to 4 p.m.

The public is invited and everyone will have the opportunity to view the progress of the work. Marilou Warner is writing the script for the docents who will be stationed throughout the building to inform the guests about the museum's points of interest.

The exterior of the museum has been the focus of our efforts thus far so that we can be a good neighbor in our new location. Guests will have the opportunity to walk through the structure and get an idea of how work on the interior of the museum will progress.

The interior stairway to the basement has been installed; the partitions for the restroom and gift shop are in place; and much of the "modernization" carried out in the past 40 to 50 years will be removed so that the interior can reflect how the house appeared around the turn of the century.

The following Sunday, October 27th will be the dedication and open house for the Main Library's new addition. Dr. Ramon Hernandez, director of the library, who will be the speaker at our November meeting, is hoping that everyone will also plan to attend their dedication.

Finally, we want to thank the Sports Information Office, especially Mr. Bruce Madej and his staff, for giving the Historical Society the opportunity to hold the September 22nd meeting in the Press Box of the University of Michigan Stadium.

About 100 persons heard Howard King talk about the history of the Stadium and enjoyed a tour of the facility

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MICHIGAN STADIUM:
MAGNIFICENT MEMORIAL TO COACH YOST

While more than 100,000 persons normally file into Michigan Stadium on home football Saturdays in Ann Arbor, only a few hundred sports writers, broadcasters, photographers, U-M officials and VIP's ever ascend to the exclusive precincts of the Press Box.

The "box" atop the middle of the west wall houses an "incredible" amount of very valuable electronic equipment and is kept under lock and key.

Howard KIng, the voice of Michigan football for the past twenty years, took WCHS on a tour of the exclusive aerie September 22, after telling about the history of the stadium.

During his talk most of those attending seated themselves where sports writers normally sit in two rows overlooking the field through a window wall on the bottom floor of the three-tier press box.

"Good afternoon and welcome to the University of Michigan Football Stadium Press Box," King said upon introduction, echoing his familiar greeting to stadium audiences.

At the south end of the reporter's room about 40-50 seats are occupied by people who keep statistics, he said. Computers and duplicating machinery are brought in. Within moments after a game a complete set of statistics is being passed out. When I first came there were no computers and it took about an hour.

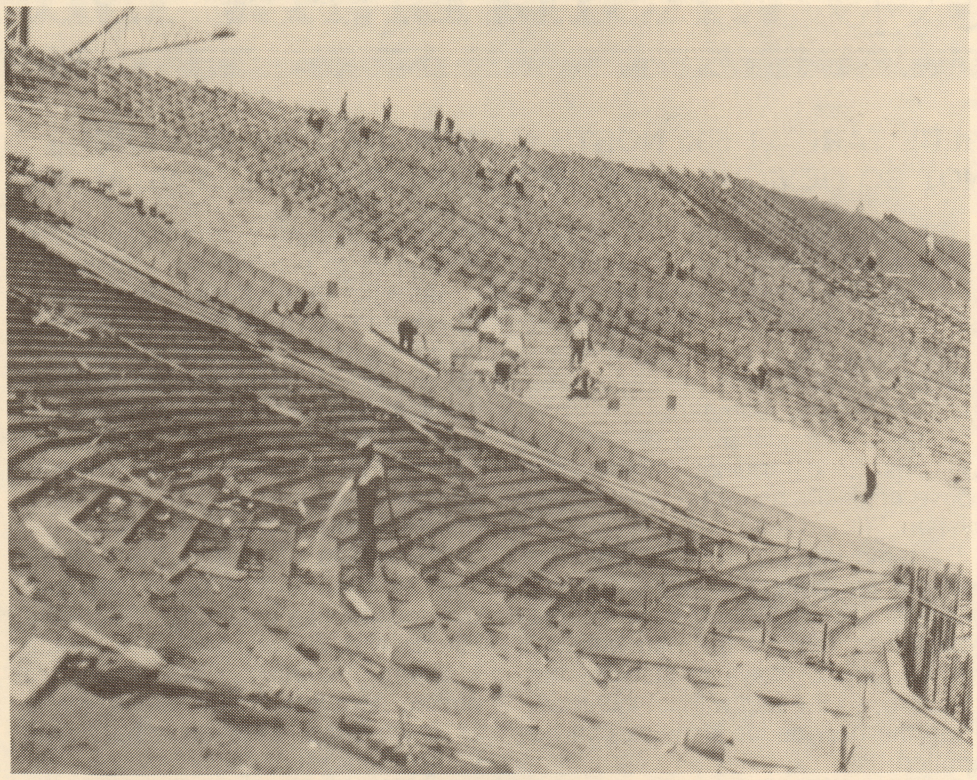
"I'm not in this room but there's a tradition I think is generally adhered to -- no cheering.

"I think the reason is obvious--they don't want to interrupt each other. They are working very hard. Most of them now use computers. They are writing their stories as they go.

"It's kind of eerie to be sitting in here, I guess, with a huge crowd outside making all kinds of noise and its absolutely like a tomb here."

The public address system he was using was not the system he uses regularly. "It's for internal announcements about running statistics or calls for someone. The outside system is a little different although we're working off the same set of amplifiers that are upstairs."

"Here's my game plan. I'd like to go through some of the formal history of Michigan Stadium, then I'd like to go through some of the material Pauline Walters dug out at Bentley Library about the stadium.



Photos: Michigan Historical Collections, Bentley Library

U-M Stadium under construction in 1927

The stadium is built on springs and there is said to be quick sand. Did you know, according to tradition, somewhere near the Block M in the middle of the field there's a steam shovel that sunk below the field in quick sand?

"I don't know if its true or not. Mr. (Fritz) Crisler (former athletic director) said it is.

"It makes a great story though. Think about it. Wouldn't it be great, if right in the middle of a game, all of a sudden through some kind of apocalypse or something, that steam shovel rose right up in the middle of the field, knocking down Ohio State players as it came?"

"We do know that the driving force behind this magnificent stadium was a most unusual person. Depending on what you read and who you believe he was either a genius and a visionary or a mad man, almost a lunatic.

"He certainly had great foresight back in the early twenties or before to recognize that there was a great future for athletics and for Michigan, in particular, if they could capitalize on it.

"I don't think he had any way to envision television, yet he put in provision for television equipment. Very strange, but it's there."

"Right above the print reporters' floor is the open air photo deck for cameramen with television cameras and long distance lenses. "Some of the cameramen literally have lenses that are longer than I am tall, huge lenses that bring the camera right down where the whole face fills the screen from clear up here. That's how good those cameras are now.

Also on that deck is the "little shack with blue walls" that looks very fancy on TV when they have inside shots of the television commentators there.

Above the photo deck is what is called radio row, the top of the press box. While the print reporters room is open, the radio deck is subdivided into something like seventeen or eighteen individual booths or rooms for radio crews, coaches, public address announcer (King), and others.

Behind the print reporters deck and below it, with no view of the field, is the dining room which is about one third the size of the print reporter's room. The U-M President welcomes VIP's there. Then they can watch the game from the President's box or room on the top tier.

"Athletic Director Jack Weidenbach has a box up there, retired Athletic Director Don Canham maintains a box for his family, Bo Schembechler had a box up there but he's on ABC now so we probably won't see him.

"My box is right next to where Bob Ufer, a legend in this business, used to be. He was the person who introduced me to Don Canham and got me an audition when I came here. I had never been in Michigan Stadium.

"My first introduction was to try out (as stadium announcer). They had had tryouts all summer. I was in the last round of these tryouts. Just a few people were sitting across in the east stands trying to figure out which one would be the best.

"I got called several days later and told that I was picked so that was quite an honor.

"The stadium opened in 1927. It was formally dedicated at a game against Ohio State held here October 22. The Wolverines won 21-0.

"There was a big parade, bands, all kinds of dignitaries. It culminated several years of fast-track building.

"It actually opened October 1 when Michigan played Ohio Wesleyan, a little school down near Wooster, Ohio, where I'm from and Michigan also won that game.

"It is due to the foresight of Fielding H. Yost who did incredible advance planning in order to get this thing underway."

Looking across the empty stadium, you can see that the older cement of the original stadium is lighter gray than the newer cement above where temporary bleachers were replaced in 1956 with steel bleachers.

"The original size was approximately 77,000. It was in those seats and some temporary bleachers that people sat to watch the games.

"This is an incredibly well built stadium. If they ever have to take it apart I feel sorry for whoever has to do it.

"Don Canham says Yost planned to somehow seat up to 500,000 people in one place. Now that is probably apocryphal. There is documentation that Mr. Yost wanted enough of a solid footing to accommodate up to 150,000 people. He envisioned a second deck.

"There are no obstructed view seats which is very unusual. You go to Tiger Stadium--some seats you can hardly see the field. Here supposedly there are no bad seats. There are some seats which aren't as good as others.

"One of the great stories about the Stadium is its attendance figure. The figure that is quoted now is 101,701. People often wonder how did it get to be that number. There are several stories.

"Canham says he has a hidden seat some place nobody knows about that's Number One. That's not what it is though.

"It turns out that Fritz Crisler (a former Athletic Director), who also had a good mind in marketing, decided that it was too easy to have an even number.

"The number originally was something like 87,000 and then went up. Crisler added an extra number to it and said the extra seat was for him. He wouldn't tell anybody where it is.

"Its a marketing gimmick pure and simple. It's a lot easier to think of 101,701 than it is 101,700."

"It's sort of a mythical figure when it comes to actual attendance these days. How in the world do you get 107,000 people in 101,000 seats?"

As he was talking a helicopter flew over the stadium a couple of times. "A lot of people fly over here," he noted, "and take pictures. The blimp always comes a day early to practice camera angles.

"Michigan had won football championships in 1922, '23, '25, and '26 and there was enormous demand for seats. Michigan was playing at Ferry Field then, about a quarter mile or so northeast.

"The seating at Ferry Field had been increased from 21,000 to 46,000 but according to Mr. Yost's figures there was still enormous demand way beyond that and he was having a great deal of difficulty accommodating all the people who wanted seats.

"In the meantime, Ohio State had built a great stadium in the early twenties, seating over 70,000, so there was a great deal of pressure on Michigan.

"People forget that in addition to Michigan Stadium, Yost built Yost Field House, the IM (Intramural) Building and U-M Golf Course. He called his program `Athletics for All' in his presentation to the Regents and others. He thought every student should be involved in athletics one way or another.

"There were requirements back then for participation in some sort of physical education. About 7,500 people were involved. That's quite a large program.

"When Ferry Field was in use for football games, I understand tickets were about two to three dollars. There were some box seats around the field that I think originally cost $5.

According to an article by Bob Roziek that he quoted, the history of ath-

WCHS HELPS AVERT CRISIS AT FLORIDA STATE GAME

WCHS's meeting at the U-M Stadium Press Box September 22 may have averted a real crisis at the Florida State game the 28th, Howard King said.

"This is a very busy time for us between games even though its quiet to the fans.

"The main things that are happening, of course, is the big game coming up with Florida State and whether to make a campaign for Desmond Howard (for the Heisman trophy). Michigan doesn't do that normally. I don't think they are going to but everybody is concerned.

"The pressure on this room for next Saturday is horrendous. We can put something like 600 people in the press box and they have well over a thousand requests.

"So Bruce Madej, the U-M sports information person, had promised there would be someone here to check out this sound system for me today.

"Early this morning it occurred to me Bruce is awfully busy. I checked. They forgot. I have a staff of four engineers who run the huge banks of equipment upstairs. so I called them and we met here this morning.

"Today we got it rigged up, but by going back in the main room they smelled something. They found there had been some sort of small electrical fire which had destroyed part of the amplifier.

"Normally they don't check the equipment during the week. They just come in early the day of the game.

"We might well have gone into the Florida State game without sound equipment. By discovering it today they'll have time to work on it."

letics at Michigan goes back to when students were playing cricket on State street in 1865. They set up their wickets in the street. The games were loud and unruly. This was disconcerting to citizens and scared the horses.

The Regents appropriated $50 to create a little playing field for sports. That field, a small part of Ferry Field, was called Regents Field. That's where football games were originally played.

In 1922 Mr. D.M. Ferry, Detroit seedsman, gave 21 acres around Regent's field. That became Ferry Field where some of Yost's great teams played.

Michigan was an incredible force in intercollegiate football even then. By the early twenties it was clear that Ferry Field was being outgrown by demand. The bleachers were wearing out and it would cost an awful lot to fix them up. Yost embarked on a campaign to get a new stadium.

"Several sites were suggested. This apparently was not the first choice. The first choice was just across the street at Ann Arbor Golf and Outing Club.

"I talked to one old-timer who sort of remembers this second hand. When they were approached by Mr. Yost and others, they said to him something like 'we've been here a long time, we want to stay here and the hell with you'. So Yost withdrew."

The present Stadium tract, about 45 acres, was purchased in 1925 from a number of landowners for a total cost of $250,000. There is one house left, the so-called caretaker's house inside the fence.

"As we said earlier there is a stream or spring underneath the stadium. When they excavated to re-do the field this summer you could see the soil is very sandy, very loamy."

Workmen this summer found sections of old wooden pipes which carried water to the city from wells in this area and to the south.

"I'm not quite sure how the land was originally configured. The pictures look fairly flat. There's obviously fall away here. Its said to be built on the side of a hill but I think that extends the point a bit. I think its built on the side of a slope. They did have a great deal of trouble dealing with water, sand and quick sand.

"The preliminary planning to get everything ready for the ground-breaking September 15, 1926, cost $250,000. The first game was there October 1, 1927, an incredible record."

"We've got pictures here of some old steam shovels and very old trucks and cars and a whole lot of people who worked to get this thing done in that short time and, of course, they didn't have the kind of land moving equipment then that we have now and it was done in the winter.

The work of grading, the concrete, building roads and approaches and so on cost almost half a million dollars. The total cost of the stadium including land acquisition and planning is computed to be something like $1.2 million with the actual cost of the edifice around $950,000 in 1927 dollars.

EMBARRASSING MOMENT

"I have a crew that helps me with plays—four spotters down on the field, two spotters up in the booth and four engineers," Howard King, Stadium public address announcer said.

"If I make a mistake everybody knows it. I've made some mistakes on plays but I think my most embarrassing one was when I was making a safety announcement at the end of the game and I said, 'Remember to buckle up. It's the law here in Ohio.'"

King, a native of Ohio, came to Ann Arbor in the early 1970s.

"In the summer of 1927, as things began to shape up, Tommy Thomas, a landscaping and grounds person at Ferry Field, went up somewhere near Whitmore Lake and bought all the sod. The sod, one quarter clover, was planted in the summer and took hold well enough to play that fall.

"Mr. Yost had said seating capacity should be 100,000 or 150,000. There was a great deal of discussion about that. In fact, there were some very interesting arguments about building the stadium at all. Mr. Yost encountered some very tough opposition.

"This idea of having a stadium like this suggested to many folks undue emphasis on sports. Doesn't this sound a little familiar?

"There was a great debate but Mr. Yost prevailed with some very politically astute planning.

"He apparently finally agreed on some figure around 70,000 seats with up to 15,000 people in the wooden bleachers on top where steel is now, putting possible attendance up to somewhere around 85,000.

The stadium, which is now the largest college owned stadium in the country, is a single-purpose unit. All other college stadia have tracks around the outer perimeter. You can imagine back then this created a good deal of debate and argument as well.

Some 240,000 square yards of dirt were excavated. There are 440 tons of reinforcing steel in the concrete. The original seats were 22 miles of California redwood. (The present polymer seats were put in in the late '60s or early '70s.

"Obviously, one of the strong cards Mr. Yost played was his plea to the regents that this stadium will cost the University nothing. Yost and his colleagues offered $500 bonds at three percent in 1925-26.

"They were kind of panicky because the first subscription didn't go very well but, over time, they issued enough to raise just over $1.2 million. The leftover money went into a sinking fund to pay off the bonds as they came due and some was used for other sports programs.

"It was raised through the subscription, totally independent of any University funds. A few of those bonds are still privately held by persons who chose not to turn them in, but essentially all are said to have been redeemed.

"When the first offer to buy a bond for good old Michigan didn't quite do it, Yost sweetened the deal by giving bond purchasers the privilege of buying two tickets per bond in choice seating areas for ten years."

King pointed out the east side block, yellow with a block M, and noted there is a similar block on the west side (between the thirty yard lines up to about one third to one-half way up. "As things got a bit tough during the depression, they extended that and allowed people to hold the bonds. I saw where someone got $3.75 interest per quarter."

"People still vie for those seats and I'm told that the waiting line is a very long one to get into them.

"Mr. Yost retained law firms in Washington D.C. and Lansing to make sure the bonds were tax exempt. By pulling a few strings they finally got the ruling from the commissioner of the Internal Revenue Service.

"The letter is in the file that decides, as long as the Regents and Athletic Board in Control are in charge, that

these bonds will be tax exempt both at state and federal levels, a leverage for helping people to purchase them.

"Attendance declined during the depression, apparently came back toward the end of it, fell off during World War II but picked up quickly after the war.

"In 1949 the capacity was increased to 97,200, partly by change from temporary bleachers to permanent steel bleachers.

"In 1956 the present press box was constructed for between $500,000 and $600,000. It was an enormously expensive press box. It's said to be one of the better ones.

"I've been to most of the Big Ten press boxes and its okay. I don't think it's as luxurious as some. There have been a good deal of recent renovations.

"Those who work around press people know that they are freeloaders--they love to have food and drink brought by somebody else, so up here is a nice cafeteria.

"It used to be, when I first started, a kid came down with a little box and gave me a hot dog. Now there's a very nice set-up here with great soup, hot chocolate, kielbasa, another kind of Polish sausage, hot dogs and sometimes other things. But when you go down to Ohio State they serve a big steak dinner.

"Shortly after the new Press Box was built, the stadium capacity was raised to 101,001 by crowding some seats in. Then when the box seats were removed from around the side of the stadium the figure went up to 101,701--the current published figure.

"It is my understanding the actual attendance can be a little larger than that now because when they excavated deeper this summer and put new turf in, it changed the configuration around the bottom. I'm not quite sure how they did it--it might have been a new row. If that's true it adds something like 1,400 more seats.

"The last time I talked to the ticket people they were printing 101,701 tickets.

"In 1969, Tartan Turf was put in, the first artificial surface. In 1982 the field was re-turfed with what they called All Pro Turf, a different kind of artificial turf.

"If you had a chance to walk on the artificial turf you'll know its a very unforgiving surface. Its very hard, almost like walking on concrete, very hard, very thin nap to the rug.

Coach Fielding H. Yost

"It was advantageous to the players because it could be kept reasonably dry and they could get a pretty good footing.

"There was a great debate about which was better. The physicians still say the data are mixed.

"The natural turf which we now have, in a form called Subscription Turf, is a very spongy, very complex surface, and is much more forgiving.

"I don't think you would have seen the catch which Desmond Howard made in the Notre Dame game over in the northeast corner. He stretched right out flat, right on the other side of the "n" in "Michigan"in the end zone.

"If he had done it on artificial turf, the ball probably would have been jarred off. Most players don't try that maneuver on artificial turf because its so hard on their bodies. They get all kinds of bruises and scrapes and sometimes get injured.

"When they were excavating this summer they went down something like 15-18 feet, I believe, back down to some of those original tile. They put in huge tiles to carry all that moisture. Huge pumps are also buried, then there's kind of a springy surface, almost like a netting that's put down, then some sand and loam and finally this turf.

"The turf is brought in in rolls. I remember standing here and watching people unroll it right across the field. It took several days. There are sensors buried in the field and they can determine the amount of moisture that's needed.

"There are sprinklers on right now. You'll notice which ones are on has changed since we got here. They are set up to automatically water the field when it needs it.

"There are also pumps under there that, if it rains a hard rain, can drain up to one inch of rain water an hour without getting mud or standing water. One inch per hour is a very heavy rainfall.

"The field can also be heated during inclement weather. They can keep snow off with tarps but they can also keep surface moisture off by heating. It's an incredible field. it was developed at Purdue.

"It's a very nice surface. Its springy, just like a good lawn. It is mowed regularly.

"Mr. Yost was very careful," King said. "He got a very talented group of engineers together. The specs (specifications) were written in great detail down even to the formulae for the various concrete footings.

"Now there's an argument about why Yost went down 90 feet. He's normally credited that he foresaw the future and that there could be a second deck built on those footings.

"The other side of the coin though is some of Mr. Yost's detractors said the only reason he did that was because he built it in the wrong place. He had to go down that far to get to bedrock so he could build the damn thing at all.

"Let's go to the genius side. In 1927 when this stadium was poured he had the foresight--and remember there was no television until 1939 as far as I know--that down below us in a room just below the Press Box, he arranged to have poured into the cement six or eight large conduits that now handle the electronic wiring that go with TV.

"You have no idea how much wiring goes from here to there--all the TV stuff, all our stuff. I have people on the field that I talk to with phones, the coaches talk to people on the field. Those wires are buried, pulled through the conduits. They would have had to be hung someplace.

"Yost knew there was something electronic coming. It's that kind of thinking that leads me to come down on the side of Yost as a genius."

In Yost's report to the Board in Control of Athletics in 1925 he goes into great detail about the athletic program at Michigan and says nothing about a stadium. All he does is make a great case for a powerful program for all students.

Just after that in 1925 came out a supplement that lists the capacities of

other great stadia in the United States. He just makes a simple point that all these are being built. He makes a point of Michigan's attendance. He says there is great interest here.

"He leaves his point at that. The guy's a master, really.

"The next paper, shortly after this is a report on the stadium situation at U-M. This is where he makes his case and he does it in a masterful way.

"He makes his case based on what he calls the needs of tomorrow. He talks about the interests to be served if we could expand the stadium and why. He has figures, he has done all kinds of planning.

"This document, done today, would stand up very well compared to the kind of planning the strategic marketing people do. He made a wonderful case of how he would do the whole thing."

King quoted in part from a copy of Yost's handwritten notes that he thought Yost had in his hand when he talked to the Regents.

"Twenty-seven years ago it was my privilege to become associated with the University of Michigan and most every student on the campus has been (known) to me since that time.

"The victories and defeats, the plant, the coaching staff and what it means to me are just an opportunity.

"I have long since learned that it is what you put into the lives of others--friendship, my boys. I love the spirit of Michigan which is so well expressed in their songs--"The Yellow and the Blue," "Varsity," ""The Victors."

"I love the University of Michigan. I believe in the University of Michigan, the maker of men, and in the spirit of the University and in the spirit of Michigan..."

King didn't know if they were original or not but Yost's final words were, "There is a destiny that makes all of us brothers, none goes his way alone. It is what we put into the lives of others that comes back into our own."

Then comes the authorization of the Regents. There was a very large argument about the size.

It says in part, "with respect to the stadium discussion, the Board of Regents can see no reason for necessarily confining the seating capacity to 60,000.

"In fact, in our opinion, a stadium of 70,000 would not be objectionable. On the other hand, we share the common belief that in view of many other needs of the University, the stadium construction should be so handled, to use a common current phrase, so as not to 'overdo it.'

"With these comments we are entirely content to leave the details of the problem to the present Board in Control of Intercollegiate Athletics and their successors in office.

"From their knowledge, experience and study and from the agitation and discussion which has taken place on the subject already, they are fully capable and qualified to handle the matter in the way that will produce the greatest good to the greatest number with the least friction."

"The Regents statement is one of the reasons why this stadium is intentionally very plain, King said. Many stadia are built with ornate entries. This is a very plain building. It was not to be ostentatious in any way. You'll notice it is 'Michigan Stadium'"-- not named in any other way.

A memo notes, "Of the dozen or so sites that have been considered all but three have been eliminated. The three still under consideration are the so-called Miller tract (where the stadium is); the Johnston tract, about one quarter mile south of Ann Arbor Golf and Outing and about one third of the way from Main to State Street; and the Ann Arbor Golf Club.

"The attitude of a considerable number, though perhaps a minority of the stockholders of the Ann Arbor Golf Club, being that it is so vigorously antagonistic to the golf grounds being taken to use as a site, it is thought wise to eliminate this as a possibility," Yost wrote.

Of the remaining two it was thought the Johnson tract was so far out even local citizens would go in automobiles while the present closer in site would be much more convenient for the citizens and there would be no need for extensive parking areas.

A new state highway, M-17 (Stadium Boulevard) was going to be built. That with the train track just to the east was thought to make it a much more desirable site.

"I have some air pictures of the first games. There are only a few cars parked along what is now Stadium, a few along Main Street, a few where Pioneer High School now is, two dozen or so where Crisler Arena is but 55,000 people got in there and came in very few cars. They must have come by train or walked from downtown.

"A great treatise, probably 30-40 pages specified all the material including the quality of the water used to mix the cement. There were absolute terms about how much acid would be in the water, how much oil.

KIP TAYLOR WHO MADE FIRST TOUCHDOWN IN STADIUM REMEMBERS LEGENDARY FIELDING H. YOST

Ann Arborite Kip Taylor who made the first touchdown in the new Michigan Stadium in 1927 was present and remembered as a kid that part of the stadium site was an orchard with apple trees.

He corroborated Howard King's findings that many people thought Fielding H. Yost was crazy—digging such a monstrous big hole, building a stadium that seated 75,000, building a student golf course. No one had ever heard of that.

"I used to talk with the old man. When they found all this water they didn't know what to do with, Yost said it was simple," Taylor said.

"We're going to pipe it right across the road because I'm going to build a golf course. A lot of the water still goes to a centrifugal pump over there. It does not water the whole golf course though.

"He got a Scotsman named McKenzie, a great golf architect, to come to this country. He designed three courses—Pebble Beach, Augusta Masters and the University of Michigan's, three of the finest courses in the country.

"Whoever heard of a field house until Yost came along. He said we practice in inclement weather. Why don't we practice under a roof?

"They had contests to find a name but nobody could. So Yost said all it is is a house over a field—we'll call it a field house. Now every school in the country has a field house."

King agreed with Taylor that Michigan Stadium is the only one in the country without posts anywhere.

"I think this stadium is one of the great places in this country," Taylor concluded.

"Yost had an incredible mind. He was obviously working with engineers but everything is down to the very last tittle.

"Mr. Mercier, the low bidder, was the contractor who did the excavation and poured the footings. He didn't realize how much trouble those springs were going to be and apparently he went way over his contract, $20,000 or more. He made a plea to the regents to help him out.

"There's a fascinating script here of discussion on the Mercier matter. Many of the regents were loathe to do anything--it was tough luck. Others thought they ought to do something. Apparently they eventually arbitrated and Mr. Mercier got several thousand dollars.

Immediately following the Mercier discussion the Regents heard a report of the medical committee on Wassermann (syphilis) tests for candidates for athletic teams. A motion was made to drop the matter until such time as it would apply to the rest of the student body. It carried but Dr. (Clarence Cook) Little, (President) voted no," King noted.)

"There were a number of editorials written around the state about the stadium and its purchase. There was some very strong opposition to Mr. Yost on this but also over time a great deal of support.

Most of the editorials in the Yost file were supportive. One from the *Sault Sainte Marie Evening News* goes on and on about how Mr. Yost has the right idea. A *Grand Rapids Herald* heading said "Untie Yost's Hands" and goes on about how much Michigan needs this.

Yost wrote, "I did not want to take my vacation this summer on account of the campaign. As soon as the football season is over I plan on taking a short time for an operation.

"It would aid me if I might settle on a definite reorganization plan soon so that all the work possible could be done before November 15 when I'm due to be operated on. The doctor refuses to let me delay this any longer." Everybody was totally dedicated, King commented.

CERTIFICATE OFFERED

Hand-lettered certificates are offered free of charge, framed if desired, by WCHS to organizations for milestone anniversaries. Information: 663-8826.

TURNABOUT'S FAIR PLAY

In a *Boston Herald* article headed "U of M To Have Big Stadium" the president of the U-M Alumni Club there said:

"After the completion of the new stadium, Harvard might be willing to go to Ann Arbor to play football, but until Harvard is willing to play a return game with Michigan, that University would never consent to meet the Cambridge team again."

"And that statement evoked sharp applause from the alumni in the room. He said this would apply equally to all other colleges and universities."

EAT AT KNAPP'S? SAVE POINTS FOR VCR PLEASE

There's a "free" VCR in WCHS's future if members and friends can collect 16,509 points from Bill Knapp's Restaurants by October 31, 1992.

Anyone who eats at any Knapp's Restaurant can obtain a yellow points slip from the cashier each time with 1 point for each dollar spent.

Please collect and give or send to Alice Ziegler, 537 Riverview Drive, Ann Arbor, MI 48104. The museum will need a video cassette recorder to show videos such as the one made of the house move.

Some may recall WCHS successfully obtained a movie screen in 1987 by collecting Knapp's points. More information: 663-8826. Bon appetit.

TREE TO BE PLANTED

The Ann Arbor Visitors and Convention Bureau will plant a tree in honor of their retiring board members at WCHS's Museum on Main Street, 500 North Main, at noon October 29. All welcome.

WHAT IS IT? GAME OFFERED SCHOOLS, GROUPS

WCHS offers a traveling exhibit of small artifacts set up as a humorous *What Is It?* game to schools for children and another for adults.

They are available for classes and meetings. Information: Arlene Schmid, 665-8773.

FROM THE PRESIDENT
MUSEUM ON MAIN . . .

(Continued from page 1)

afterward. *A good time was had by all!*

Thanks also to the staff of the Michigan Historical Collection in the Bentley Library who were most helpful in locating material about the building of the Stadium. In case you were unaware—there are a lot of wonderful people in this town!

Pauline Walters

KEMPF TOPICS: LACE, CITY'S FIRST JEWS

Kempf House, 312 South Division, Ann Arbor, is continuing its brown bag lecture series on a variety of historic topics at noon Wednesdays. Listeners are invited to bring their lunch. Beverage is provided.

October 16, Janice Bhavsar will discuss and demonstrate bobbin lace making. October 23, Helen Aminoff's topic is "The First Jews in Ann Arbor: 1830-1880—A Settlement of People Who Came and Went 20 Years Before Any Others Arrived." Later programs will be announced. Information: 996-3008.

Kempf House is also open for guided tours 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Wednesdays and 1 to 4 p.m. Saturdays and Sundays through December 15.

HOW TO JOIN WCHS

Send name, address and phone number with check or money order payable to Washtenaw County Historical Society to:

WCHS Membership
2200 Fuller Road, 1202 B
Ann Arbor, Michigan 48105-2307

Annual dues are $10, individual; $18 a couple. Senior individual (60), $8, senior couple, $14. Sustaining dues, $50, commercial, $25, and student, $5. Only one of a couple need be 60.

HISTORIC HAPPENINGS INVOLVE:

ANTIQUE APPRAISALS, TREES, STEPHEN MILLS, AUTO LICENSE PLATES

Chelsea Historical Society: 7:30 p.m. second Monday at Depot, North Main at Railroad tracks.

Dexter Society: Carry-in antique appraisal clinic by Dumouchelle Galleries of Detroit, 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Saturday, October 26, at museum, 3443 Inverness. Fees for verbal and written appraisals by registered appraiser. Information: 426-2519.

Museum open 1-3 p.m. Fridays and Saturdays.

Manchester Society: 7:30 p.m. third Tuesday at Blacksmith Shop, 324 East Main. Sybil Kolon, a forester, will talk about "Trees in Manchester" October 15.

Reno Feldkamp is society president; Deborah Havens, first vice president (programs); Howard Parr, second vice president (museum acquisitions); Betty Cummings, secretary; Loring Ebersole, treasurer.

Directors include Sandy Trolz, Tom Walton and John Swainson, immediate past-president.

Milan Society: 7:30 p.m. third Wednesday at Hack House, 775 County Street.

Northfield Society: A repeat antique appraisal program planned at St. John Lutheran Church, for fall membership meeting in October, date to be announced.

The Society also will co-sponsor a Sunday history day open house at the Northfield Township Library, 125 Barker, Whitmore Lake, date to be announced. Information: 665-8077.

Pittsfield Society: 2 p.m. first Sunday at Pittsfield Town Hall, State and Ellsworth Roads.

Salem Society: 7:30 p.m. Thursday, October 24, at the home of Warren and June Todd, 8985 North Territorial Road at Weed Road. Program on "Worden" (Pontiac Trail and Five Mile Road).

By popular demand, the society will present "Mozart Comes to Salem II," an evening of recorded music in the Salem Walker Church, Angle Road at Seven Mile Roads at 7:30 p.m. Saturday, October 19. The church and cemetery were recently listed on the State Register of Historic Places. The first Mozart program was last May.

Saline Society: 7 p.m. third Wednesday at Senior Center, 7605 North Maple Road. Mary Culver of the Ann Arbor Historic District Commission and WCHS Board will talk October 16 about "Stephen Mills Designed Houses." There are several in the Saline area.

The Society is putting a new roof on its depot-livery barn historical center. The cupola was to be put back on the livery barn early this month.

Webster Society: 7:45 p.m. second Monday. October 14 meeting in Blacksmith Shop on Webster Church Road near Farrell Road with recap of history work done and future plans.

Ypsilanti Society: Annual fall dinner at 5 p.m. Sunday, November 10 at First United Methodist Church, 209 Washtenaw. Dick Wiley of Ann Arbor will talk about "The History of Automobile License Plates in Michigan." The church is celebrating its centennial this fall.

Recently elected to two-year terms on the society Board were Robert Fink, Gordon Cahours and Howard Berg. The museum is now constructing a ramp for handicap access at the south door and refurbishing some of its furniture.

GSWC TO HEAR VENDORS

Several vendors will explain their market area, display and sell their materials and services at the Genealogy Society of Washtenaw County meeting Sunday, October 27, 1:30 p.m., Lecture Hall II, Liberal Arts and Science Building, Washtenaw Community College.

Wendy Elliott will conduct a workshop on "Southern Research and Migration Patterns" 1-5 p.m. Saturday, November 10, in Lecture Hall I of same building. Registration $10.

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WASHTENAW COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

OPEN HOUSE

1 to 4 p.m. Sunday, October 20, 1991

MUSEUM ON MAIN STREET

500 North Main
Ann Arbor, Michigan

WASHTENAW COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY
2200 Fuller Road, 1202 B
Ann Arbor, Michigan 48105-2307

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